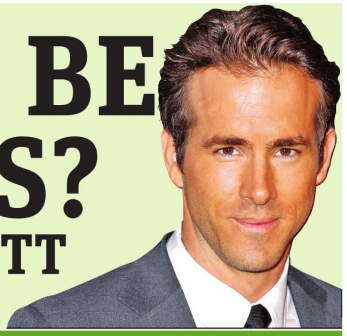
YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH CHOCOLATE SNOWFLAKE TART ALL DRESSED UP {page 15}

CAN WE BE FRIENDS?
RYAN & SCARLETT

{page 11}



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News worth sharing.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

▶ Carollers, from left, Manveer Sihota, Melanie Parent, Caty Langlands and Hannah Garrett outside the Vancouver Art Gallery yesterday.

Does festive decor put a damper on cheer?

People who don't celebrate Christmas negatively affected by decorations, SFU study finds ◐ Detrimental to mood, self-assurance and sense of inclusion

Public Christmas displays increase stress in people who do not celebrate the holiday, a new Simon Fraser University study found.

"Christmas displays in December makes people who do not celebrate Christmas feel like they don't belong," said Michael Schmitt, the SFU psychology professor who headed the study.

Students who don't celebrate the holiday experienced a negative shift in mood and self-assurance when placed in a room with a Christmas tree, the study found. Though the tree improved the mood of Christian students, it didn't affect their sense of inclusion — yet it had an adverse effect on the sense of inclusion felt by Sikhs and Buddhists.

However, a Vancouver Buddhist group said yesterday that not only has it not dealt with any decorative dilemmas, it has embraced the holiday — and even put up a Christmas tree at its temple.

"For us, Christmas is like Halloween," said Yonnie Wong of the Vancouver International Buddhist Progress Society. "It's fun to decorate ... It's cultural."

Wong said while the group doesn't celebrate the religious side of the holiday, it does participate in the charitable fundraising that comes with the season of giving.

Carolling by the Vancouver Art Gallery Christmas tree yesterday to raise money for homeless shelters, Delta resident Manveer Sihota, a Sikh, said it's droll to think decorations are causing anxiety in those who don't celebrate the holiday.

"It's the same as saying that lighting candles outside your house during Diwali are stressing people who don't celebrate Diwali," Sihota said. "Decorations are supposed to bring cheer to people — just for the beauty of it." ● KIMIYA SHOKOOHI

What do you think? Reach us at vancouverletters@metronews.ca or on Twitter @vancouvermetro.

The RSVP going AWOL

Common courtesy of a reply fading away {page 13}

Celebrate the bad and the ugly

Anything goes for hideous Christmas sweaters {page 3}

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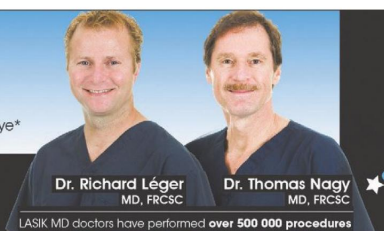
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Celebrate the holidays at Robson Square

Enjoy free skating and live music

This winter, renew a classic Vancouver tradition and enjoy some old-fashioned fun.

Robson Square's outdoor skating rink is open, so celebrate winter in style with free skating, hot chocolate and live entertainment in the heart of downtown Vancouver.

It's a magical place to enjoy the holidays with your friends, family and loved ones.

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Holidays:

- December 24, 2010: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- December 25, 2010: Noon to 5 p.m.

Skate and helmet rentals, skate sharpening and a concession stand are available at the rink.

For more information, visit *www.yougottabehere.com*. Have a safe and happy holiday season.

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Party shooter found guilty

A Vancouver man will receive a mandatory life sentence after a jury yesterday found him guilty of shooting and killing his former boss at a Christmas party in 2008.

Eric Kirkpatrick, 63, was convicted of second-degree murder in the shooting death of 40-year-old Benjamin Banky.

Crown had pushed for first-degree murder, while defence argued for manslaughter, arguing that Kirkpatrick suffered mental-health issues.

"The jury's verdict indicates that they didn't believe the Crown had proven beyond a reasonable doubt that there was planning and deliberation," defence attorney Richard Fowler said.

● KIMIYA SHOKOOHI

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

▶ Attorney Richard Fowler

Charges follow gun play on highway

Two men are facing dangerous driving and weapons-related offences after allegedly shooting at another car along the Burnaby Lakes stretch of Highway 1.

The driver of a Volkswagen Jetta called 911 around 2:20 on Saturday morning after her rear window was shot out by the occupants of a Pontiac Sunfire, said RCMP Sgt. Peter Thiessen.

● KRISTEN THOMPSON

DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Vito Caputo, owner of Retro Rock Vintage Clothing, wears a Christmas sweater while posing for a photo at his store in Vancouver on Saturday.

Ugly sweaters — yule love 'em

In Vancouver, the 'original' Ugly Christmas Sweater Party is in its ninth year ● Has become a huge charity event at a downtown club with prizes for the worst outfits ● Recent showstoppers include a sweater with a shakable snow globe

What's old is new again as hipsters and oldsters alike troll second-hand shops or call up Great Aunt Lou in search of sweaters so heinous, they'll scare off the ghosts of Christmas past.

This year, Ugly Christmas Sweater parties have turned the "what's not" into "what's hot."

"Every year, the world is injected with more tacky sweaters," said Kyle Reagan, a 25-year-old Vancouverite whose home business selling cheesy holiday attire snowballed into a full-time job in just two years.

Reagan knew he was onto something horribly magical when he hunted down 20 sweaters, put them up for sale on Craigslist and they were snapped up in a week.

This year, along with the hefty pile of vintage pieces, he handcrafted his own ghastly garb complete with glued-on ornaments and blinking LED lights.

"Anyone who ... comes in and sees them personally starts laughing immediately," he said. "It brings great joy over the holiday season, which is what it's all about." THE CANADIAN PRESS

1 news

'Undocumented and unafraid' students ramp up political theatre in the U.S. Scan code for the story.

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On the web at metronews.ca

Bank of Canada will keep a close eye on this week's release of inflation data for the end of 2010. Video at metronews.ca.

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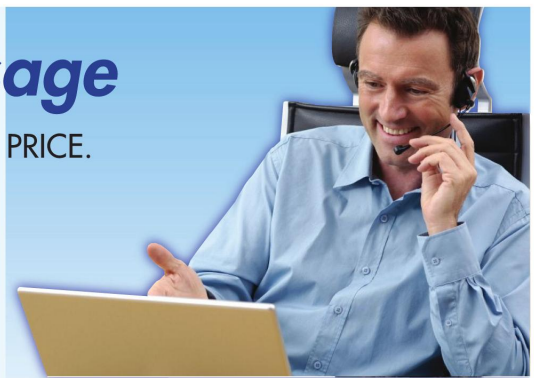

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JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

▶ Skye Lawson and Susan Lee skate at Robson Square yesterday.

Robson's 10 days of Christmas

Rink at Robson Square open this week until 9 p.m.

Looking for something to do with family and out-of-town guests leading up to Christmas? Head to Robson Square.

The venue outside the Vancouver Art Gallery will be a bustling holiday Mecca this week with roasted chestnuts, free public skating and live music in the evenings. "We can plan and program as much as we want but really it's about the people and what they want to do," said Mary McNeil, minister of Citizens' Services and MLA for Vancouver-False Creek.

"We had a wedding proposal and an ugly sweater event. It's like the old (saying), 'If we build it, they will come,' and that's exactly what we're trying to do."

● KRISTEN THOMPSON

Lineup

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Why do newcomers still face wage gap?

The race issue can't be ignored: Social scientist

As analysts dissect the data to figure out why it is that newcomers to Canada these days are having a much harder time than previous generations of immigrants, they're bumping up against an uncomfortable answer.

Discrimination, they say reluctantly, can't be completely ruled out.

For 30 years, the landing for newcomers to Canada has become steadily rougher. In the 1980s, the source countries for many of Canada's immigrants were in flux, shifting from traditional English-speaking or European countries, and more towards Asia, says social scientist Arthur Sweetman at McMaster University in Hamilton.

Language and cultural barriers were, and continue to be, a set-back for immigrants hoping to close the earnings gap with Canadian-born workers, he says.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Eroded earnings

- Part of the answer is that Canadian employers are often suspicious of foreign credentials and experience. So immigrants who, on paper, look equivalent to Canadians in education and background, aren't valued as highly, says Mikal Skuterud at the University of Waterloo.

Belarus. Election

▶ Protesters rally in the capital, Minsk, yesterday as they denounce Belarus presidential election saying it was falsified, Alexander Lukashenko, Belarus's authoritarian leader, a frequent antagonist of both Russia and the West, sought a fourth term in yesterday's elections, and his opponents claim he was prepared to commit fraud to get it.

SERGEI GRITS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leader accused of election fraud

3 North and Central America should be able to view the entire show, expected to last three hours if skies are clear. Total eclipse begins at 11:41 p.m. PST.

Moon show tonight

Weather permitting, sky gazers in North and Central America and a tiny sliver of South America will boast the best seats to this year's only total eclipse of the moon just days before Christmas.

The eclipse will happen tonight. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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PAUL SULLIVAN

This is a tale of two cities.

One is Vancouver, which wants to be the greenest city in the world. The mayor and his team of Visionaries are busy building homeless shelters, dedicated bike lanes and community gardens. They encourage residents to raise chickens and even keep bees at city hall.

Toronto, on the other hand, is going thataway. New Mayor Rob Ford considers cyclists "a pain in the ass" and the moment he was sworn in cancelled a vehicle levy, declaring "the war on the car" over. Ford has told more than one protester to "get a job," and the only bees are in his bonnet, at least according to his critics.

Not too long ago, Toronto had, in David Miller, a mayor who was pretty much indistinguishable from our own Gregor the Good. Not that it seemed to do Toronto much good. A recent report shows the middle class is being squeezed out of Canada's biggest city and low-income residents have increased to 53 per cent of the population.

"The issues are much the same in both cities — only the well-heeled can inhabit their gleaming towers. At the same time, there are fewer well-paying jobs, so working families have to move ..."

The issues are much the same in both cities — only the well-heeled can inhabit their gleaming towers. At the same time, there are fewer well-paying jobs, so working families have to move to Maple Ridge or Langley near Vancouver, Brampton or Orangeville near Toronto. Everyone else ends up in substandard housing. Or on the street.

Rob Ford's response to all this is to assemble a giant time machine and take everyone back to 1970, where cars ruled the road and the standard response to social unrest was: "Get a job."

Here in Vancouver, it's full speed ahead. We can't get any more progressive, but that won't stop us from trying.

So we have this giant, national social experiment and I hope I'm around long enough to see how it turns out. I just have to be careful when stepping off a downtown curb. Those bicycles are silent and deadly.

Who knows? Mayor Ford may be right — he's certainly right wing — maybe the antidote to crime, homelessness, unemployment and other forms of urban decay is to "get a job."

Or maybe the genie has been out of the bottle too long, and if we're going to combat pollution, alienation, hopelessness and poverty, what better champion than the man from Happy Planet?

I get the feeling that it won't be too long before the answer comes our way.

I just hope I'm in the right city at the right time.

Cartoon

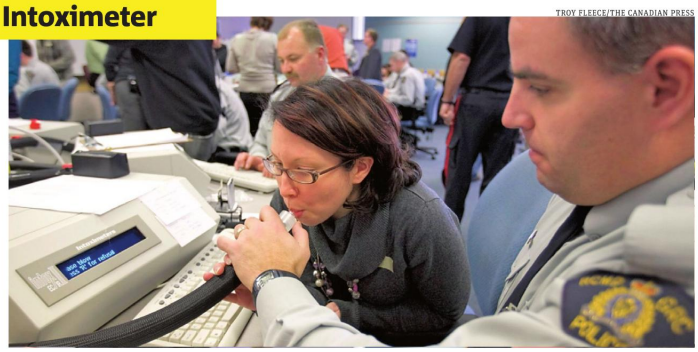
MICHAEL DE ADDER

Device targets drunks

Worth mentioning

Intoxicator

TROY FLEECE/THE CANADIAN PRESS



There's a long, steady beeping sound as a Mountie encourages a young woman to breathe into a plastic mouthpiece connected to the next generation in breath testing technology.

The young woman and half a dozen other people in the room who have been drinking are not in trouble. They are helping nearly 20 officers at the RCMP training academy in Regina learn how to use the new Intoximeter.

The device uses infrared and fuel-cell technologies. It's an upgrade from the old device, which just uses infrared to give readings. The new Intoximeter will be used when suspected drunk drivers are taken back to the police station or detachment, not at the side of the road.

It will catch the experienced drinkers who are otherwise good at masking symptoms of being drunk, said RCMP Cpl. Michael Benjamin, a veteran traffic services officer from Weyburn, Sask.

"You see a lot of guys that have developed such a tolerance that they're not slurring their speech," he said. "Their eyes aren't glazed. They're not showing the typical signs of somebody who'd be in the upper 100s, the lower 200s for readings, and they're talking and acting as normal."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

What's more fun – Christmas or New Year's Eve?

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Metro Minute at Brief Encounter

Stop thinking about Christmas for a while and laugh and cry in the age of romance. The Vancouver PlayHouse presents Noel Coward's Brief Encounter, an enchanting adaptation of the 1945 film with the same name.

It was adapted faithfully by Emma Rice with characters that seem to leap off the screen. The play follows the lives and loves of three couples at a train station tea room. Shows begin tonight at 8 at the Vancouver PlayHouse, located at the corner of Hamilton and Dunsmuir streets, and runs until Dec. 23. Tickets are $59 to $65 for adults and $37 for students. Visit vancouverplayhouse.com for more info.

AYAKA KAWAI

CONTRIBUTED

▶ The Vancouver PlayHouse adaptation of Noel Coward's Brief Encounter.

Hackers of the world set to unite in 2011

Facebook is likely holding a skills competition to seek out new talent, says Alan Middleton of York University

Hacking, the reclusive sport of individuals with socially crippling intelligence, is being pulled from the depths of the suburban basement and thrust onto the podium.

Well, there might not be a podium, but there is talk of a cup.

Facebook has created a page containing details about a Hacker Cup in 2011. People can apply and compete online and a final 25 will be flown to compete in the algorithmic programming contest in California in the new year for $5,000 US and the title. The tests are designed by Facebook engineers.

Inside the Facebook universe hacking or hack is used as terms for all-night coding benders, rather than for the more popular interpretation of someone who creates codes or viruses to interfere with or destroy computer programs.

Alan Middleton, a marketing guru housed at the Schulich School of Business at York University, was admittedly a bit baffled at the prospect, given the elevated public perception of hacking of the more nefarious kind. "In a world where we are getting increasingly concerned about privacy (does Facebook) want to be associated with hacking?" asked Middleton.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Hacking culture

Registration for the Hacking Cup opens today.

- **Rounding up hackers** Facebook spokesperson said, "Hacking is a central part of Facebook's culture. We want to bring engineers from around the world together to compete in a multi-round programming competition."
- **In the spotlight** Hackers supporting WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange have crashed corporate websites, including MasterCard, in retribution for Assange's arrest.

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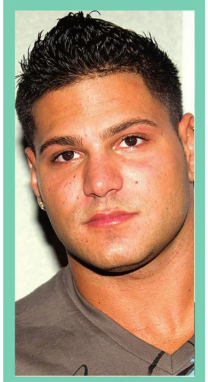
News in brief



One of the stars of MTV's Jersey Shore has been indicted for an assault that prosecutors say happened just off camera during the first season.

A grand jury in Ocean County, N.J., says there's evidence that Ronald "Ronnie" Ortiz-Magro committed a crime.

The indictment was issued Thursday and made public Friday.

The grand jury said the 25-year-old reality TV star knocked a man out with a punch on Sept. 4, 2009, when the show was being filmed in Seaside Heights. While the punch wasn't shown on the show, Ortiz-Magro was seen bragging about it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Larry King, viewed by more than 2 million, triples his typical audience for farewell

FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Actresses Cloris Leachman and Martha Plimpton speak onstage during the Raising Hope panel for the Fox portion of the summer Television Critics Association press tour in August.

Fun being a granny at 40

Actress Martha Plimpton has no problem playing a granny in the Fox comedy Raising Hope

TIFFANY ROSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

METRO WORLD NEWS IN HOLLYWOOD

American actress Martha Plimpton who is best known for playing quirky roles in indie movies, shot to fame in the teen classic The Goonies in 1985.

Born into a performing family — her father is Keith Carradine and her mother is Shelley Plimpton — Martha has starred in I Shot Andy Warhol, Running on Empty and Beautiful Girls. She currently plays Virginia Chance on the new Fox comedy Raising Hope, about an uneducated working class family attempting to raise a baby.

Metro caught up with the 40-year-old star in a Beverly Hills hotel.

After being a big indie actress, was it a big decision for you to chose to do a television comedy series?

It was a big decision only in the sense that it involved leaving my home city of New York for a while and having a steady gig, which is great by the way.

But as far as the decision to do it, it wasn't a tough one at all. I read the pilot and I thought it was hilarious. I loved Virginia.

What's it like playing a grandmother at the age of 40?

At first of course I was a little bit nervous because I thought, "Well, shouldn't I play a mother first?" I don't even know if I'm ready for that yet! (Laughs). And you can't forget that Hollywood does tend to age people rather rapidly so I was naturally concerned about that as any actress would be.

But that is the joke. The idea that these people have no idea what they were doing when they had their own child and that child is a father and we've got to learn how to be adequate, responsible grandparents all over again.

So in that sense I don't feel like I'm playing a grandmother — like I'm not wearing a gray wig or walking hunched over or anything like that.

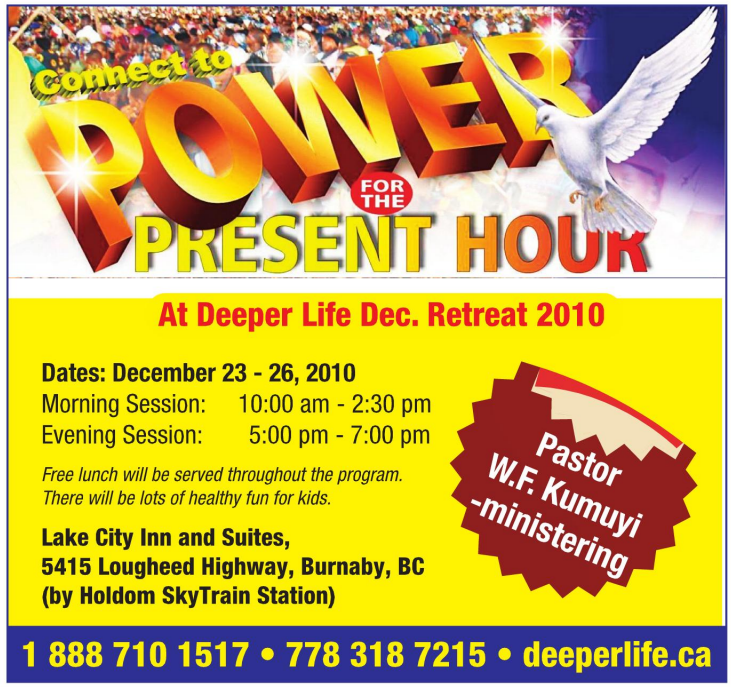
What's it like having the legendary Cloris Leachman playing your grandmother?

She is an unbelievable actress and woman. So much fun.

This is a woman who ate actual shaving cream. If there is a joke to be had, nothing will stop her!

We had a scene where she is asleep and we are grooming her in the middle of the night as it's the only time she will let us. I'm shaving her legs and then she sort of pops up awake and we all hide underneath the bed.

This is entirely improvised by Cloris — she took some of this actual shaving cream, it was not whipped cream and just ate it! And she did it like for three takes.



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No drama for Ryan, Scarlett

Hollywood couple recently went public with their decision to split

Ryan Reynolds

They may have announced their separation last week, but Ryan Reynolds and Scarlett Johansson looked mighty amicable during dinner at a New York restaurant this weekend, according to People.

"They just wanted to connect and have a friendly chat," a source says. "The tone was light and fun, despite the untruths that the media is working up. They aren't reconciling. This was just two people who were married being civil and friendly." METRO

Jolie-Pitts spending holidays on the road

Despite spending most of the autumn on the road, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt won't be coming home for the holidays.

"We're going to travel with the kids and go to a random part of the world," Jolie tells Ryan Seacrest during a radio interview.

"We're going to travel and have an adventure because that's what we love to do."

The biggest challenge for Jolie, whether at home or abroad, is keeping gifts straight for all six of her kids.

"I've got it all boxed and ready to go," she says. "I'm trying to get every stocking right." METRO

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6 eggs, separated, divided
1/2 cup sugar, divided
1 pkg. (6 squares) *Baker's* Bittersweet Chocolate, melted, cooled
125 g (1/2 of 250-g pkg.) *Philadelphia* Brick Cream Cheese, softened
1 tub (1 L) *Cool Whip* Whipped Topping, thawed, divided
2 Tbsp. *Maxwell House* Instant Coffee Original Roast
3 Tbsp. warm water
1 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder

Make it

HEAT oven to 350°F.

LINE 17-1/2 x11-1/2x3/4-inch pan with parchment paper; spray with cooking spray. Beat egg whites in small bowl with mixer on high speed until frothy. Gradually add 2 Tbsp. sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

BEAT egg yolks and 1/4 cup of the remaining sugar in large bowl with mixer until thick and lemon coloured. Add melted chocolate; beat just until blended. Gently stir in 1/4 of the egg whites; stir in remaining egg whites until well blended. Spread onto bottom of prepared pan.

BAKE 15 min. or until top of cake springs back when touched with finger. Cover with dampened clean tea towel; cool cake in pan 1 hour. Meanwhile, dissolve coffee in warm water; cool. Beat cream cheese and remaining sugar in medium bowl until well blended. Gradually beat in coffee. Gently stir in 2 cups Cool Whip.

REMOVE towel from cake. Use parchment paper to lift cake from pan; spread cake with Cool Whip mixture. Starting at one long side, roll up cake, peeling off parchment as cake is rolled. Diagonally cut off one end of cake; reserve. Place cake on platter; place removed piece, diagonally-cut side facing out, next to log. Frost with remaining Cool Whip, leaving exposed ends unfrosted. Sift cocoa powder over cake.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 110, Total fat 7 g, Saturated fat 4.5 g, Cholesterol 45 mg, Sodium 35 mg, Carbohydrate 9 g, Dietary fibre 1 g, Sugars 8 g, Protein 2 g, Vitamin A 4 %DV, Vitamin C 0 %DV, Calcium 2 %DV, Iron 4 %DV.

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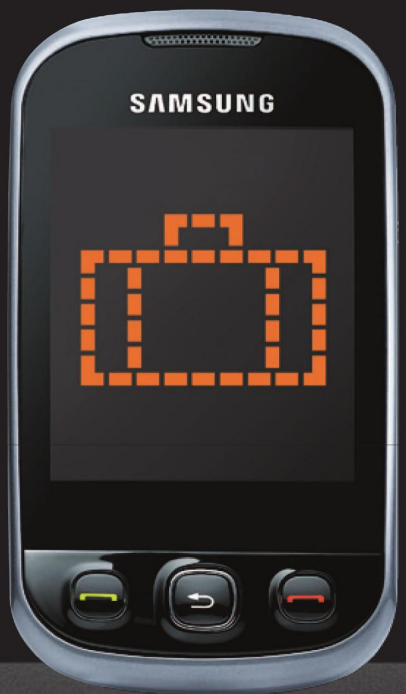

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ISTOCK IMAGES

▶ RSVPs, which were once common, seem to be disregarded more often these days.

Is the tradition to RSVP now passé?

The once common courtesy of replying to an invite is becoming a lamented thing of the past

It's become an acronym for a host's frustration: RSVP — Really, Seriously Very Peeved.

From casual get-togethers to catered affairs, the once-common act of replying to invitations has become an often lost and much lamented cause.

"It frustrates me to no end that people disregard or dismiss RSVPs as optional, especially when I have been nice enough to invite them to a party," says Dawn Pearce, 35, a technical support specialist in Raleigh, N.C. "I get so aggravated I don't know why I even bother with invitations at all."

A social code that has endured for generations, RSVP is short for "repondez s'il vous plait" or, "please reply."

Invitees should answer as soon as possible, according to etiquette expert Lizzie Post, a great-great-granddaughter of graciousness guru Emily Post.

"It's not like I'm asking you to write a letter ... All you have to do is hit reply."
RICHARD FIORE, A RETIRED MUSIC EXECUTIVE, ON REPLYING TO RSVPS

Replies, however, can even be hard to get when the event is for business.

In Phoenix, Kim Horn deals with lacking and late RSVPs for meetings of her professional group, though its members should know better – they're wedding planners.

For those who can't stomach angling for RSVPs, some companies will take on the task for fees that can run into hundreds of dollars.

How did we get to this point of no RSVP return?

Some point to technology as a factor. In an era of constant, instant status updates, one person's RSVP may be another's "C U in 5."

"Technology is changing our culture, the way we communicate ... which than means it changes the way we connect and disconnect," said Gerald Goodman, a psychologist and communication expert, and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The fading of RSVP could, he suggests, signify "a new etiquette of freedom."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 life

Family in brief

A survey by the University of Southern California found that two-thirds of parents say they restrict their kids' access to TV as punishment, a number that hasn't budged in 10 years. But the percentage of parents who limit Internet access as punishment has nearly doubled.

Among parents surveyed, 57 per cent said they withheld web access to punish their kids, up from 32 per cent in 2000.

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The NYE baby sitter race is on...

If you are seeking child care for the 2011 countdown, be prepared to pay big because rates can double

HENNY RAY ABRAMS/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE

▶ Experts warn that parents who are looking for New Year's Eve child care should be prepared to pay extra and offer incentives.

Parents, give yourselves the gift of an early resolution: Snag a sitter pronto for New Year's Eve and expect to open wallets wide.

The hunt for child care on the year's most lucrative night began in June for some parents, though the more usual approach is to wait until the last minute, panic and shell out top dollar.

"Most people will book the week before New Year's Eve. We're still a society of procrastinators, for sure," said Melissa Marchwick, a spokeswoman in Chicago for the caregiver match service sittercity.com.

Hourly rates for the big night can more than double, she said. Some sitters are looking for extra incentives like fatter tips, festive food and safe, cost-free passage home amid the craziness.

"The parents who start looking earlier have more of their pick and there's less competition," Marchwick said. "They can get sitters at normal rate."

Marchwick's site, which charges membership fees but offers a free, seven-day trial, has about a million caregivers available nationwide. The site helps parents check references, conduct interviews and use free access to background checks.

The race for New Year's Eve kid care is fierce because many sitters like to celebrate, too. College kids are on break from classes and fewer high schoolers babysit at all, consumed by lives of academics, sports and extracurriculars.

"We're seeing an older sitter," Marchwick said. "The average now is 27 years old, much more experienced."

Want a sitter but can't afford double time? Pay for two or three hours and add a flat $100 to spend the night. If that's too much, share a sitter with friends and try to negotiate, but don't forget the tip.

"I kind of think New Year's is overrated," said Samantha Haviser, a 24-year-old volunteer co-ordinator for a non-profit in Washington, D.C. She plans to babysit.

"I'm getting hassled by friends right now for being lame and not wanting to go out but, hey, I work for a non-profit. I can use the cash," she said.

Haviser is asking for $25 to $30 an hour.

Mom Laura Ceriello, 41, in New York City, said making merry en masse like the Times Square scene means the night belongs mostly to amateurs. She and her husband had two party invitations, one that included kids and one for adults only. They chose to bring their five-year-old daughter along.

"Maybe I'm just too old," she said.

Tracy Ferry in suburban D.C. usually spends $12 to $15 an hour for a sitter.

She and her husband are throwing a party for New Year's Eve and she found care for the children of friends when she booked her own help at an hourly rate of $30.

"I just wanted them to be able to come to the party," Ferry said. "We know how difficult it is to solidify child care on New Year's Eve. It's more expensive than I was anticipating, but it's worth it."

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▶ Chocolate Peppermint Snowflake Tart

The holidays are perfect for chocolate

▶ The Chocolate Peppermint Snowflake Tart is easy to make and great to bring to parties ▶ Be creative and change up the flavours or cookie shapes

Ganache tarts are elegant, decadent and the epitome of chocolate love.

Best yet, they are easy to make, can be prepared ahead of time and transport well. In other words, they are perfect for the holidays.

This dressed-up version is flavoured with peppermint extract and topped with festive snowflake cookies, but you could just as easily flavour it with orange, almond or vanilla extracts and top it with whatever cookie shapes inspire you. Holly leaves would be pretty and elegant, and snowmen would be fun.

Ingredients :

Crust:
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
- Pinch salt
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) cocoa powder
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) sugar
- 175 ml (3/4 cup) unsalted butter (1 1/2 sticks), cut into chunks

Ganache:
- 300 ml (1 1/4 cups) heavy cream
- 250 g (8 oz) semisweet chocolate
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) peppermint extract
- Powdered sugar, for dusting

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 190 C (375 F).
2. In a food processor, combine flour, salt, cocoa powder and sugar. Pulse to combine. Add butter and process until mixture forms a dough, about 30 seconds.
3. Remove dough from processor and break off about a third of it. Set this aside.
4. Press remaining dough into bottom and up sides of a 23-cm (9-inch) tart pan with removable bottom. Use a fork to prick bottom of crust all over. Freeze for 15 minutes, then bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until centre of bottom feels firm.
5. Meanwhile, make snowflake cookies. Roll out reserved dough between 2 sheets of parchment paper to 3 mm (1/8 inch) thick. Move dough to a baking sheet, including parchment paper, then refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes.
6. Use 2.5- to 5-cm (1- to 2-inch) cookie cutters to cut out 8 to 10 snowflakes (of multiple sizes, if desired). If dough becomes too soft, you may need to chill it in the refrigerator as you work. Once all of the cookies are cut, transfer them to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and refrigerate for 10 minutes.
7. Bake snowflakes for 10 to 15 minutes (depending on size of the cookies) or until firm. Let cookies cool on baking sheet.
8. Ganache Filling: In a small saucepan over medium, heat cream until simmering. Add chocolate and let sit off heat for 2 minutes. Stir until smooth. Stir in peppermint extract, then pour into baked tart shell. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours.
9. When ready to serve, dust snowflake cookies with powdered sugar, then arrange them on the top of the tart.

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Paninis for three meals a day

Vancouver couple explore the wide variety of sandwich options with iconic Italian bread

Dominique and Cindy Duby love sandwiches, which came in handy when their cookbook publisher suggested they do a book on paninis. They were ecstatic.

Better known for their gourmet sweet dessert books, the Vancouver artisan chocolatiers embraced this new challenge with gusto.

The origins of panini are in Italy. They are typically meat and cheese sandwiches that are served hot after being pressed in a grill. The word panino is Italian for small bread roll and panino imbottito (stuffed panino) refers to the sandwich.

The Dubys not only created 40 original savoury and sweet recipes, but they also photographed each finished panini and then ate them, says Dominique.

"We were eating paninis for breakfast, lunch and dinner," says Cindy with a giggle.

Dominique says it was important for them to try many different breads "because it is one of the most important components."

"If the bread isn't very good, the sandwich itself won't be any good," he says.

The pair found ciabatta bread is one of the best because it has a crisp crust and a soft, porous texture, and it is light to the touch.

"We found it has the more open-crumbed form with a sourdough starter," says Dominique.

All the testing and tasting has become the newly released Panini: Gourmet Recipes to Help You Get the Most from Your Panini Press (Whitecap, paperback, $19.95).

To punch up the flavours in the sandwiches, Cindy says they made a lot of dried fruit butters.

"One such is the dried fig spread, which just adds a sensational flavour to the sandwich and gives it a new dimension, which makes a big difference," she says.

They give recommendations on the best panini presses on the market and pairing wine and beer with the sandwiches.

There is also a section entitled Panini 101, which takes readers on a step-by-step tour of ingredients to choose and on how to prepare this delicious meal so fitting for today's casual lifestyle.

The soft texture and slight sweetness of the brioche combine perfectly with the tangy goat cheese and fragrant minted leek in this panini recipe from the book.

Ingredients :

- 4 slices brioche bread or 2 brioche buns, halved
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) butter, plus extra for spreading
- 1/2 medium leek, (white and light green parts only), thinly sliced
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) finely chopped mint (optional)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 90 g (3 oz) soft goat cheese

Chevre and Leek Panini

Preparation:

1. Preheat press to medium heat 190 C (375 F).
2. In a saucepan, melt 30 ml (2 tbsp) butter on high heat; add leek and quickly saute until wilted, about 1 minute. Remove from heat, add mint, if using, and stir until well mixed. Season with salt and pepper.
3. To build each panino, arrange or spread ingredients in the following order: brioche, one-quarter of the goat cheese, leek, one-quarter of the goat cheese, brioche.
4. Spread butter on outside of panini (top and bottom) and grill for 5 to 8 minutes or until cheese is melted and bread nicely grilled.

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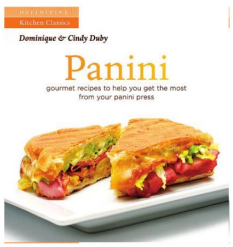

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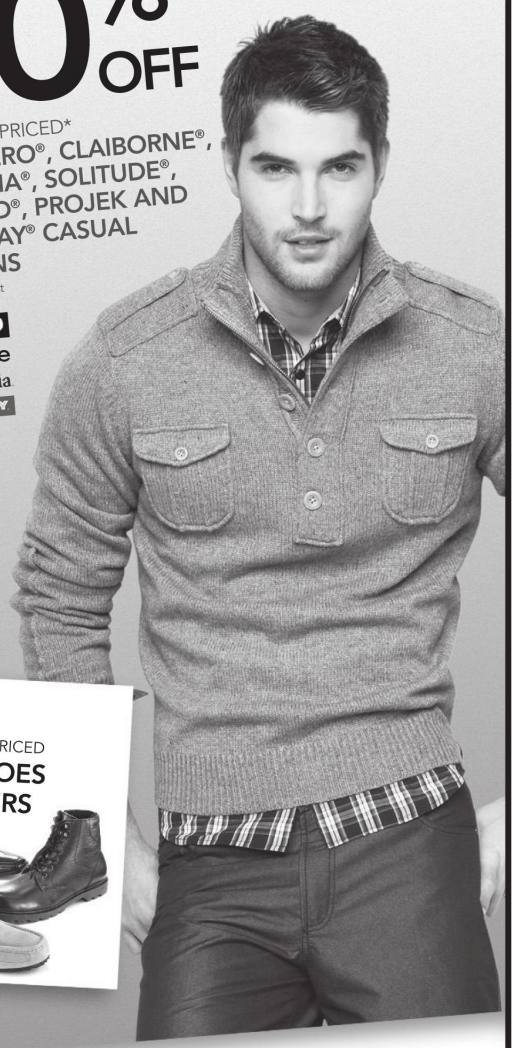

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COMPOSTING MADE EASY FOR CITY LIVING

I would love to compost, but I am not sure how to manage it in an apartment. What are the options? It seems that the city of Montreal is not really as compost-friendly as other Canadian cities. ***Erika of Montreal***

I have one word for you: worms. Just because you don't have yard space doesn't mean you can't join the growing number of Canadians who are composting. Statistics Canada's research from 2006, albeit dated, showed 27 per cent of households nationwide composted. And, Quebec households have steadily been increasing their rates of composting, too.

You need to try vermicomposting! It's ideal for small spaces and can be done indoors, which makes it perfect for apartment dwellers. It means you discard organic matter generated in your kitchen — like banana peels — by feeding it to worms. But not just any worms; you're going to need some red wrigglers.

The result is a very fertile mixture of decomposed food scraps and worm poop.

Vermiculture is a great way to reduce the organic matter otherwise destined for the landfill. The process takes three to six months and depending on how much you feed your worms, you'll need to harvest the vermicompost two to four times a year. It's excellent fertilizer for gardens, laws, or potted plants on balconies and even indoor plants.

Fans of worm farms claim they're much easier to care for than a dog or a cat and they don't smell. There are many great online resources to help you source and set up your very own worm bin.

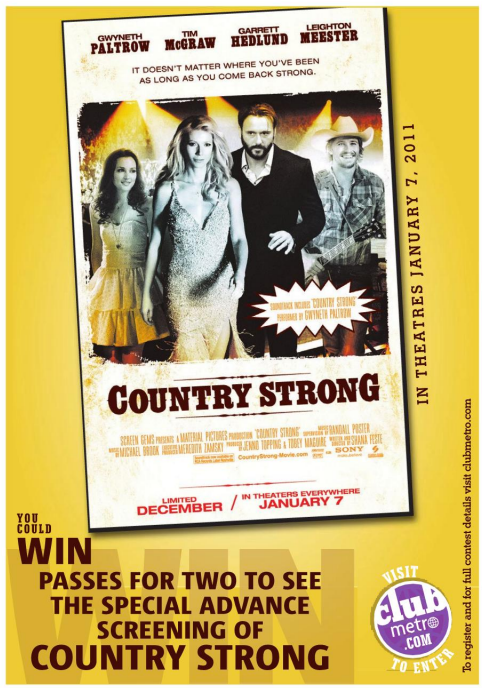
Check out City Farmer's resources listed by province, or Worm Girl Montreal, who sells worm bins and worms at wormgirlmontreal.wordpress.com.

Composting

Know the ins and out of what makes composting work.

- **Worms** The decomposition process is aided by shredding the plant matter, adding water and ensuring proper aeration by regularly turning the mixture. Worms and fungi further break up the material.
- **The benefits** The compost itself is beneficial for the land in many ways, including as a soil conditioner, a fertilizer, addition of vital humus or humic acids, and as a natural pesticide for soil.

Vermiculture is a great way to reduce the organic matter otherwise destined for the landfill.



TurningPoint

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MIRACLE ON YONGE STREET

"I was so scared when we arrived in Canada that I told my husband we needed to go back to India."

Two years later life is a lot better for Hyma and her young family thanks to the caring people at Yonge Street Mission in Toronto.

They arrived in Canada with the promise of a job in the computer industry for her husband and that's all. It was a lonely and frustrating time for Hyma.

Her daughter cried all day long missing her grandparents, aunts and cousins. With no money to afford day care, Hyma couldn't work. She pushed her stroller through the streets of the city with her distraught daughter unsure of where to turn for help.

Then one day she walked into the Yonge Street Mission and her life made a turn for the better.

She signed up for a computer class and reluctantly left her daughter at the Mission daycare. As Hyma learned about emails, word documents and PowerPoint presentations her daughter started to play with the other children. She began to smile, sing and dance. "I'm OK, I'm a big girl now!" she proudly told her Mom one day after class.

Although her husband is working, money is tight. By choice, they live frugally and send every extra cent to their family-run orphanage in India that looks after children with AIDS.

They have never celebrated Christmas in Canada.

"Last year we were going to go to a restaurant but we sent money to India instead and fed one hundred people at the orphanage."

Not too long ago the children in the orphanage sent a message to their generous "angels" in Canada.

They told Hyma and her husband that they were praying for them. And those prayers have been answered.

The people at the Yonge Street Mission are looking after Hyma and her family with computer classes, support services and friendship.

She recently went to the Yonge Street Mission's Christmas Market that distributes donated gifts to families in need.

Now for the first time since they arrived in Canada Hyma's daughter will finally know the joy so many children experience Christmas morning.

Be your own boss, at a cost

BOOK REVIEW

CRAIG LUND
WORK@METRONEWS.CA

Being an entrepreneur at heart is more than just an aspiration. It's a serious commitment to a very different lifestyle.

According to author and columnist Scott Gerber, there are plenty of reasons why you should burn your resumé and start up your own business.

Gerber, who has been described as the Simon Cowell of young entrepreneurship, paints a pretty graphic portrait of the real life start up in his book Never Get a Real Job, and be forewarned, it may have you rethinking your "being your own boss" fantasy.

In the first part of Gerber's book the chapters take the tough-love approach

We "were so busy riding the 'everyone-is-a-winner' bandwagon that you failed to realize you were being rewarded for mediocrity," says Gerber.

This book is written for Generation Y, and the reality is, many new grads, university- and college-educated to boot, aren't finding work.

I am certainly biased towards Gerber's opinion — fire your boss and take charge of your own fate and income, or if you're just graduating, rather than go back to school start a business.

As he highlights in his book, it is far easier to start a business when you are younger, and have less to lose.

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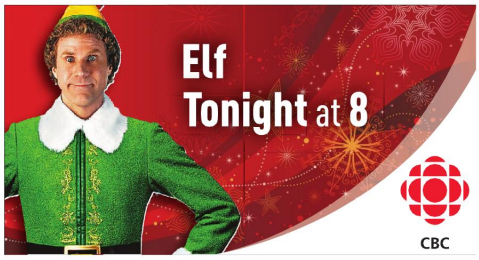


Made a major mistake

Academic advisers help struggling students cope with their woes

Exactly a year ago Ramin Asgari was struggling.

A heavy course load, looming exams and a tough transition from high school were overwhelming the civil engineering student as he approached the end of his first semester at the University of British Columbia.

Unable to see himself passing, he considered giving up — until a peer academic support group turned things around.

"They helped a lot," says the 19-year-old. "They assured me that 'Yeah, first year is like that, but it gets a lot better,' and it really does – I've gotten way better grades this year than last year."

The group review sessions Asgari attended also helped dispel the isolation that had fed his academic despair.

"I'm not feeling like I'm the only person on campus," says Asgari, who still goes to tutorials and peer review sessions in his second year.

"I'd say it was more emotional help than actual study help."

The free drop-in sessions are similar to others run at universities across the country.

The peer-run programs in particular provide a starting point for students struggling with the academic demands of university.

Vladimir Nikitin says students often come just to connect with someone else who understands.

"They find out there's a lot of them who have the same problems," says the political science student who runs a peer study session twice a week at Carleton University in Ottawa.

"It's a safe environment where everyone can share and discuss issues that are not necessarily course-related."

The informal nature of the sessions and the fact that they are run by another student also help defuse any intimidation felt by someone who may have never reached out for help before, says Nikitin.

"I can relate to those issues," says the 23-year-old who questioned his degree choice at one point as well. "It's pretty common to not know what you want to do in life when you're 18 or 19."

Building confidence, learning better time management and picking up tips on how to study better are all part of the peer sessions typically held for courses with a large number of Ds and Fs.

But while Nikitin advises most students to stick with their courses at least until after their first exams, not all problems can be solved by peers like himself. In some cases, professional counsellors are better to talk to.

Shari Woods-Baum is one of them. The counsellor at Ryerson University in Toronto says students can feel overwhelmed by university for a number of reasons making it important to pinpoint what irks them the most.

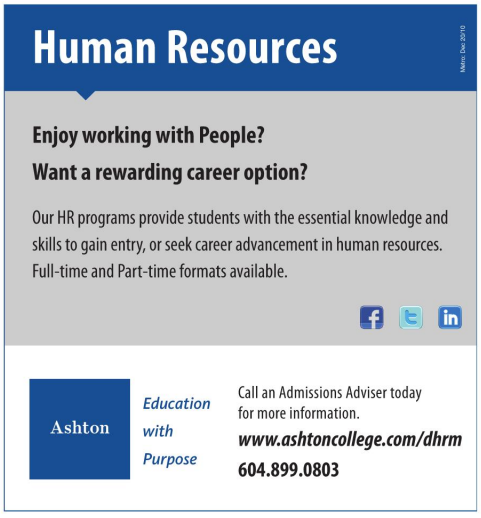
Living away from home for the first time and not knowing anyone in classes are all factors which contribute to students questioning their academic choices, she says.

"It's really a holistic process," says Woods-Baum of the evaluation students need to go through when examining their decisions.

"It's really important not to just be cavalier, we definitely want to look at the entire breadth of their life." THE CANADIAN PRESS

ISTOCK IMAGES

▶ Stressing about a possible switch? Don't pull your hair out. Experts emphasize that questioning academic choices is a natural reaction for anyone attending university.



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News worth sharing.

Eagles stun Giants

Philly in NFC East driver's seat after scoring 28 in final minutes

Just call it the great escape.

Michael Vick engineered it. DeSean Jackson capped it. And the Philadelphia Eagles have control of the NFC East firmly in their hands because of it.

Jackson scored on a 65-yard punt return on the final play of the game and the Eagles scored 28 points in the final 7:28 to stun the New York Giants 38-31 and take over first place in the NFC East.

Emphasizing his candidacy for the MVP award, Vick threw for two touchdowns and ran for another in the incredible late rally that all but clinched the division for the Eagles (10-4.)

Philadelphia has swept the season series with New York (9-5) and only needs to win one of its final two games or have New York lose one of its two.

Jackson's winning return came as the game seemed headed for overtime. Matt Dodge lined up to punt with 14 seconds to play and the rookie got off a line drive kick that Jackson bobbled at his 35.

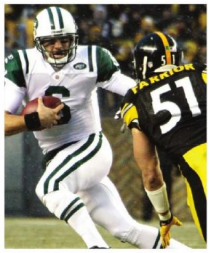
Once he regained control, Jackson broke through the initial line of coverage and sped down the right sideline. It was apparent he was about to score, but instead of simply going into the end zone, he danced along the goal line before going in with zeros showing on the clock.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KATHY WILLENS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Eagle DeSean Jackson celebrates a touchdown on a punt return yesterday.

In the playoffs



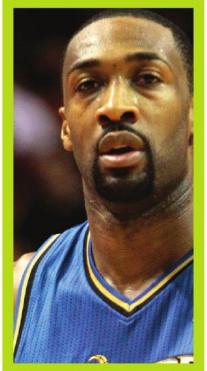
The Atlanta Falcons and Pittsburgh Steelers have clinched playoff berths, and neither team even needed to win.

- Atlanta gets in because the Philadelphia Eagles rallied to beat the New York Giants. At worst, the Falcons will be a wild card, but they have a two-game lead in the division over New Orleans, which lost at Baltimore 30-24.
- Despite a 22-17 loss to the New York Jets, the Steelers (10-4) were told by the NFL nearly an hour after the game ended that they secured a playoff spot via a series of complicated strength-of-schedule tiebreakers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

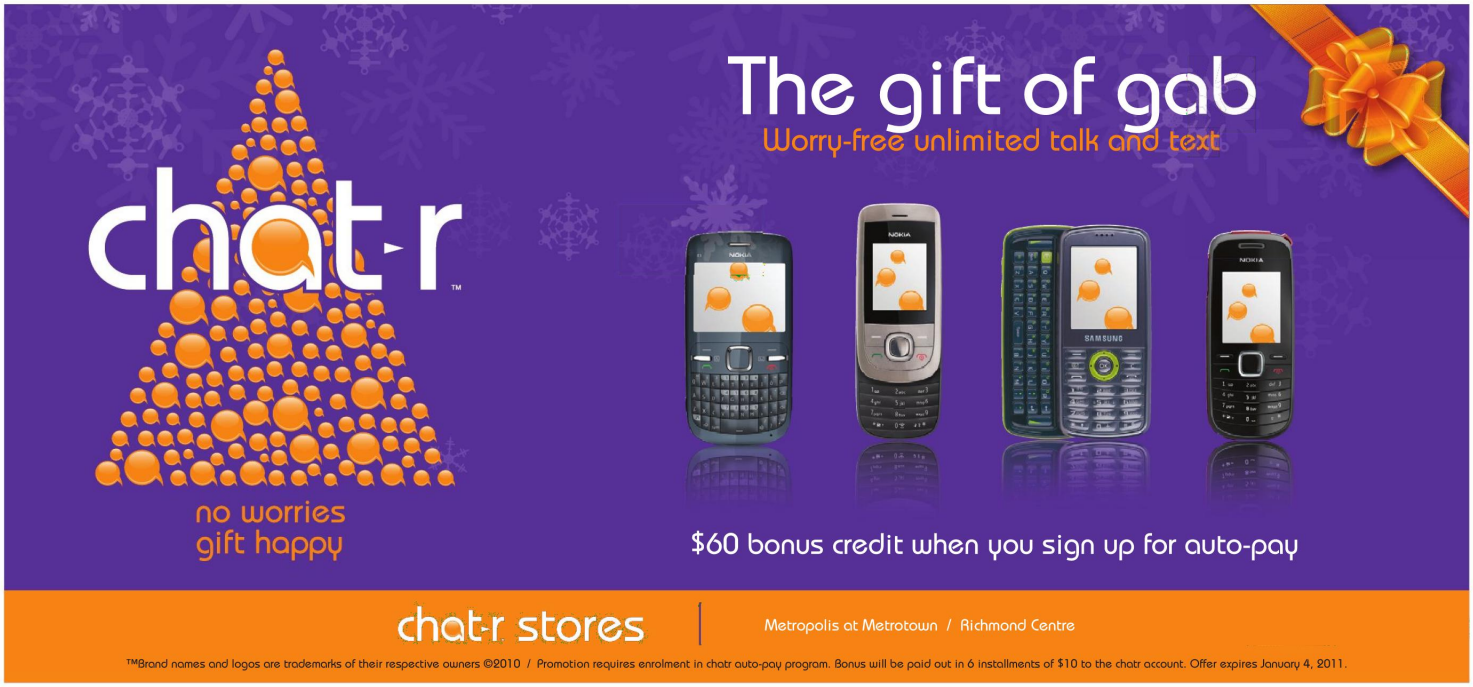
4 sports

Quoted



"This is a real new beginning with a new city, new people and new team, and I get to start fresh."

GILBERT ARENAS, ON BEING TRADED TO THE ORLANDO MAGIC



NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Philadelphia	34	22	7	2	3	117	82	49	12-5-0-2	10-2-2-1	7-1-0-2	W5
d-Washington	35	19	12	2	2	104	99	42	12-4-1-2	7-8-1-0	2-6-1-1	W1
d-Montreal	33	19	12	2	0	87	72	40	12-5-2-0	7-7-0-0	5-4-1-0	L1
Pittsburgh	33	21	10	2	0	104	78	44	10-6-1-0	11-4-1-0	8-2-0-0	L2
Atlanta	34	18	11	1	4	109	97	41	10-6-0-2	8-5-1-2	6-2-0-2	W1
NY Rangers	35	20	14	1	0	105	91	41	8-8-1-0	12-6-0-0	6-4-0-0	L1
Tampa Bay	32	18	10	2	2	99	108	40	9-2-1-1	9-8-1-1	6-2-0-2	W3
Boston	31	17	10	1	3	89	65	38	8-5-1-2	9-5-0-1	5-3-1-1	W1
Carolina	31	15	12	0	4	89	94	34	7-5-0-1	8-7-0-3	5-2-0-3	W4
Ottawa	35	14	17	3	1	81	106	32	8-9-1-1	5-8-2-0	3-4-2-1	L2
Buffalo	34	13	17	4	0	84	95	30	7-9-1-0	6-8-3-0	5-4-1-0	L2
Florida	30	14	16	0	0	80	78	28	7-6-0-0	7-10-0-0	4-6-0-0	W1
Toronto	32	12	16	2	2	72	96	28	8-6-2-1	4-10-0-1	4-5-1-0	L2
New Jersey	32	9	21	1	1	58	98	20	5-8-1-1	4-13-0-0	2-8-0-0	L2
NY Islanders	30	6	18	3	3	65	104	18	4-7-1-2	2-11-2-1	2-6-1-1	L1

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Detroit	32	20	8	3	1	105	88	44	12-4-2-1	8-4-1-0	4-4-2-0	L2
d-Dallas	33	20	10	1	2	95	90	43	11-3-1-1	9-7-0-1	6-2-1-1	W2
d-Colorado	33	19	10	4	0	121	105	42	10-4-1-0	9-6-3-0	6-1-3-0	W6
Vancouver	30	18	8	2	2	98	77	40	11-3-1-1	7-5-1-1	7-2-1-0	W3
Nashville	32	17	9	4	2	83	79	40	8-2-3-2	9-7-1-0	8-1-1-0	L1
San Jose	33	17	11	4	1	100	94	39	8-4-2-1	9-7-2-0	6-3-0-1	W2
Chicago	35	18	14	2	1	111	103	39	10-9-0-0	8-5-2-1	6-3-1-0	W2
Anaheim	36	17	15	2	2	93	106	38	11-6-0-1	6-9-2-1	5-4-0-1	L2
Los Angeles	31	18	12	1	0	90	75	37	11-2-1-0	7-10-0-0	5-4-1-0	L1
Phoenix	31	15	9	4	3	88	87	37	6-4-2-2	9-5-2-1	4-4-0-2	W1
St. Louis	31	15	11	2	3	81	88	35	10-3-0-2	5-8-2-1	3-5-1-1	L1
Columbus	32	16	13	2	1	82	90	35	8-8-0-1	8-5-2-0	3-5-1-1	L4
Minnesota	31	14	13	1	3	75	90	32	7-7-0-2	7-6-1-1	4-4-1-1	W1
Calgary	33	14	16	1	2	90	96	31	9-7-0-0	5-9-1-2	5-4-0-1	L1
Edmonton	31	12	14	1	4	84	108	29	6-8-1-1	6-6-1-2	6-3-0-1	W1

d — division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SL (shootout loss) column.

Yesterday's results
Dallas 4 Detroit 3 (OT)
Chicago 3 Los Angeles 2
Washington 3 Ottawa 2
Colorado 3 Montreal 2
Saturday's results
Vancouver 4 Toronto 1
Minnesota 3 Calgary 1
Atlanta 7 New Jersey 1
Boston 3 Washington 2
Carolina 4 Anaheim 2
Dallas 2 Columbus 1
Los Angeles 6 Nashville 1
Philadelphia 4 N.Y. Rangers 1
Phoenix 4 N.Y. Islanders 3 (SO)
San Jose 4 St. Louis 1
Tampa Bay 3 Buffalo 1
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Anaheim at Boston, 7 p.m.
Atlanta at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Florida at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Phoenix at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Vancouver at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Calgary at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

CAPITALS 3, SENATORS 2

First Period
1. Ottawa, Shannon 4 (Winchester) 7:11
2. Ottawa, Kelly 8 (Neil) 13:55
Penalties — Steckel Wash (interference) 3:19, Michalek Ott (slashing) 16:00.
Second Period
3. Washington, Perreault 3 (Laich, Knuble) 0:34
4. Washington, Fehr 5 (Ovechkin) 1:20
5. Washington, Perreault 4 (Fehr, Poti) 6:55 (pp)
Penalties — Regin Ott (slashing) 3:15, Michalek Ott (high-sticking) 5:33, Green Wash (hooking) 10:47, Erskine Wash, Michalek Ott (roughing) 12:48.
Third Period
No Scoring.
Penalties — Karlsson Ott (tripping) 1:45, Perreault Wash (hooking) 7:08, Ruutu Ott (hooking) 9:52, Carlson Wash (high-sticking) 12:35, Chimera Wash (holding) 17:15, Foligno Ott (holding) 19:43.
Shots

Washington	8	15	11	34
Ottawa	9	11	6	26

Goal — Washington: Neuvirth (W,13-6-2); Ottawa: Elliott (L,10-10-3). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Washington: 1-6; Ottawa: 0-5.
Att. — 16,471 (19,153) at Ottawa.

AVALANCHE 3, CANADIENS 2

First Period
1. Montreal, Cammalleri 12 (Plekanec, Kostitsyn) 10:50 (pp)
2. Colorado, Wilson 2 (O'Reilly, Anderson) 19:54 (pp)
Penalties — Dupuis Col (high-sticking) 10:40, Spacek Mtl (hooking) 18:03.
Second Period
3. Montreal, Picard 2 (Pacioretty, Gomez) 2:58 (pp)
4. Colorado, Porter 7 (Dupuis) 4:01
5. Colorado, Galiardi 5 (O'Reilly, Holos) 16:12
Penalties — Yip Col (interference) 1:28, Lapierre Mtl (interference) 13:03, Eller Mtl (high-sticking) 17:12.
Third Period
No Scoring.
Penalties — Hunwick Col (tripping) 5:00, Shattenkirk Col (delay of game) 15:28, Anderson Col (slashing) 20:00.
Shots

Montreal	7	8	14	29
Colorado	8	15	5	28

Goal — Montreal: Price (L,18-10-2); Colorado: Anderson (W,10-4-2). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Montreal: 2-4; Colorado: 1-3.
Att. — 18,007 (18,007) at Denver.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	PT
Crosby, Pgh	26	28	54
Stamkos, TB	25	21	46
St. Louis, TB	12	28	40
Datsyuk, Det	12	27	39
Perry, Ana	16	22	38
D.Sedin, Vcr	16	22	38
B.Richards, Dal	15	23	38
Ovechkin, Wash	12	26	38
H.Sedin, Vcr	6	31	37
Getzlaf, Ana	13	22	35
Sharp, Chi	18	16	34
Duchene, Col	13	21	34
Backstrom, Wash	11	23	34
Semin, Wash	18	15	33
Eriksson, Dal	14	19	33

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Boston	22	4	.846	—
d-Miami	21	8	.724	2½
d-Chicago	16	9	.640	5½
Orlando	16	10	.615	6
Atlanta	17	12	.586	6½
New York	16	12	.571	7
Indiana	12	14	.462	10
Philadelphia	11	16	.407	11½
Milwaukee	10	15	.400	11½
Toronto	10	18	.357	13
Charlotte	9	17	.346	13
Detroit	9	19	.321	14
Cleveland	8	19	.296	14½
New Jersey	8	20	.286	15
Washington	6	19	.240	15½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	23	3	.885	—
Dallas	21	5	.808	2
d-L.A. Lakers	21	7	.750	3
d-Oklahoma City	19	9	.679	5
d-Utah	19	9	.679	5
Denver	16	10	.615	7
New Orleans	16	11	.593	7½
Portland	14	14	.500	10
Phoenix	13	13	.500	10
Houston	12	15	.444	11½
Memphis	12	16	.429	12
Golden State	9	17	.346	14
L.A. Clippers	7	21	.250	17
Minnesota	6	22	.214	18
Sacramento	5	20	.200	17½

d-division leader
Yesterday's results
Boston 99 Indiana 88
New Jersey 89 Atlanta 82
L.A. Lakers 120 Toronto 110
Houston 102 Sacramento 93
Detroit 111 New Orleans 108 (OT)
Phoenix 113 Oklahoma City 110
Saturday's results
Philadelphia 97 Orlando 89
Miami 95 Washington 94
Cleveland 109 New York 102 (OT)
L.A. Clippers 100 Chicago 99
Utah 95 Milwaukee 86
San Antonio 112 Memphis 106 (OT)
Denver 115 Minnesota 113
Portland 96 Golden State 95
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Orlando at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
Utah at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
New Orleans at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Charlotte at Washington, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Phoenix at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Portland, 10 p.m.
Houston at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.
Minnesota at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.
Tomorrow's games
Oklahoma City at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Chicago, 8 p.m.
New Jersey at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Golden State at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
Milwaukee at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

LAKERS 120, RAPTORS 110

L.A. LAKERS (120)
Artest 2-3 2-2 6, Odom 5-9 1-2 11, Gasol 9-15 1-2 19, Fisher 2-8 2-4 7, Bryant 6-12 8-9 20, Bynum 4-6 8-10 16, Blake 2-5 0-0 6, Barnes 4-10 2-2 12, Brown 5-7 2-2 14, Walton 2-4 5-6 9. Totals 41-79 31-39 120.
TORONTO (110)
Kleiza 11-21 0-0 26, Johnson 7-12 0-0 14, Davis 0-3 0-0 0, Calderon 8-14 2-2 20, DeRozan 6-12 11-11 23, Dorsey 2-3 2-5 6, Wright 3-3 0-0 6, Bayless 1-7 2-2 4, Barbosa 3-12 4-5 11, Alabi 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 41-87 21-25 110.

L.A. Lakers	28	29	29	34	120
Toronto	34	15	30	31	110

3-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 7-19 (Brown 2-3, Barnes 2-4, Blake 2-5, Fisher 1-4, Odom 0-1, Bryant 0-2), Toronto 7-22 (Kleiza 4-10, Calderon 2-5, Barbosa 1-5, Bayless 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—L.A. Lakers 57 (Barnes 9), Toronto 39 (Kleiza 10). Assists—L.A. Lakers 20 (Bryant, Gasol 4), Toronto 27 (Calderon 12). Total Fouls—L.A. Lakers 21, Toronto 28. Technicals—L.A. Lakers defensive three second. A—19,935 (19,800).

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE
CLEVELAND INDIANS — Agreed to terms with RHP Toru Murata on a minor league contract.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Traded RHP Zack Greinke, SS Yuniesky Betancourt and cash considerations to Milwaukee for SS Alcides Escobar, OF Lorenzo Cain, RHP Jake Odorizzi and RHP Jeremy Jeffress.

FRONTIER LEAGUE
OAKLAND COUNTY CRUISERS — Signed 1B Joash Brodin and RHP Tom Moran to contract extensions.
RIVER CITY RASCALS — Signed RHP Derrick Miramontes, catcher Cooper Stewart, and RHP Ryan Zink to contract extensions.
WINDY CITY THUNDERBOLTS — Traded LHP Jared Locke to New Jersey (Can-Am) for OF Jeff Grose.

HOCKEY

NHL

CAROLINA HURRICANES — Reassigned D Bryan Rodney to Charlotte (AHL).
OTTAWA SENATORS — Recalled G Mike Brodeur from Binghamton (AHL) on an emergency basis.

SKIING

CROSS COUNTRY

At La Clusaz, France
Men
Four x 10-kilometre Classic/Freestyle Relay
1. Switzerland (Toni Livers, Dario Cologna, Remo Fischer, Curdin Perl), one hour 42 minutes 14.6 seconds; 2. Russia I (Evgeniy Belov, Alexander Legkov, Petr Sedov, Maxim Vylegzhanin), 1:42.45.4; 3. Norway I (Eldar Roenning, Martin Johnsrud Sundby, Tord Asle Gjerdalen, Petter Northug), 1;42.48.4; **Also: 9. Canada (Devon Kershaw, Sudbury, Ont.; Ivan Babikov, Canmore, Alta.; Alex Harvey, St-Ferreol-les-Neiges, Que.; and Len Valjas, Toronto), 1:45.14.2**
Women
Four x Five-kilometre Classic/Freestyle Relay
1. Norway I (Vibeke W. Skofterud, Therese Johaug, Kristin Stoermer Steira, Marit Bjoergen), 58:38.7; 2. Italy (Virginia De Martin Topranin, Marianna Longa, Silvia Rupil, Arianna Follis), 59:35.3; 3. Sweden (Sara Lindborg, Anna Haag, Maria Rydqvist, Charlotte Kalla), 1:00:02.8

FREESTYLE

At San Candido, Italy
Ski Cross
Women
Final
1. Fanny Smith, Switzerland; 2. Ashleigh McIvor, Vancouver; 3. Heidi Zacher, Germany; 4. Anna Holmlund, Sweden. **Also: Marielle Thompson, Whistler, B.C.; 11. Kelsey Serwa, Kelowna, B.C.; 12. Danielle Poleschuk, Calgary; 14. Julia Murray, Whister, B.C.**
World Cup Ski Cross Standings
(after second of 11 events)
1. Anna Holmlund, Sweden, 150 points; 2. Fanny Smith, Switzerland, 145; 3. Ashleigh McIvor, Vancouver, 116; 4. Heidi Zacher, Germany, 110; **5. Kelsey Serwa, Kelowna, B.C., 104.**
Men
Final
1. Scott Kneller, Australia; 2. Alex Fiva, Switzerland; 3. John Teller, U.S.; 4. Tomas Kraus, Czech Republic.
Also: 5. Chris Del Bosco, Sudbury, Ont.; 7. Nick Zoricic, Toronto; 12. Dave Duncan, Golden, B.C.; 19. Davey Barr, Whistler, B.C.; 27. Stanislas Rey, Whistler, B.C..
World Cup Ski Cross Standings
(after second of 11 events)
1. Patrick Gasser, Switzerland, 120 points; 2. Scott Kneller, Australia, 112; 3. Andreas Matt, Austria, 109; 4. Jouni Pellinen, Finland, 85; **5. Nick Zoricic, Toronto, 82.**

SOCCER

ENGLAND

PREMIER LEAGUE

Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Man United	16	9	7	0	36	16	34
Arsenal	17	10	2	5	34	19	32
Man City	17	9	5	3	24	13	32
Chelsea	17	9	4	4	31	12	31
Tottenham	17	7	6	4	25	22	27
Sunderland	18	6	9	3	21	18	27
Bolton	18	6	8	4	30	25	26
Newcastle	17	6	4	7	27	26	22
Liverpool	17	6	4	7	21	22	22
Blackpool	16	6	4	6	24	29	22
West Brom	17	6	4	7	24	29	22
Blackburn	18	6	4	8	23	28	22
Stoke	17	6	3	8	21	22	21
Aston Villa	17	5	5	7	19	28	20
Everton	17	3	9	5	18	20	18
Birmingham	17	3	9	5	17	20	18
Fulham	17	2	10	5	16	20	16
Wigan	17	3	7	7	13	28	16
Wolverhampton	17	4	3	10	18	30	15
West Ham	18	2	7	9	16	31	13

Yesterday's results
Blackpool vs. Tottenham (ppd., snow)
Chelsea vs. Manchester United (ppd., snow)
West Bromwich Albion vs. Wolverhampton (ppd., snow)

FRANCE

LIGUE 1

Yesterday's results
Marseille 1 Lyon 1
Sochaux 1 Bordeaux 1
Lens vs. Caen (ppd., snow)
Lille vs. Nancy (ppd., snow)

GERMANY

BUNDESLIGA

Yesterday's results
Bayer Leverkusen 2 Freiburg 2
Stuttgart 3 Bayern Munich 5

ITALY

SERIE A

Yesterday's results
Bari 1 Palermo 1
Catania 1 Brescia 0
Chievo Verona 1 Juventus 1
Lazio 3 Udinese 2
Napoli 1 Lecce 0
Parma 0 Bologna 0
Sampdoria vs. Genoa (ppd., snow)

SPAIN

LA LIGA

Yesterday's results
Almeria 2 Getafe 3
Malaga 0 Atletico Madrid 3
Osasuna 0 Zaragoza 0
Real Madrid 1 Sevilla 0

SKIING

WOMEN'S SUPER-COMBINED

At Val D'isere, France
1. Lindsey Vonn, U.S., two minutes 7.80 seconds (1:18.66-49.14); 2. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 2:08.26 (1:19.44-48.82); 3. Nicole Hosp, Austria, 2:08.49 (1:18.96-49.53) **Also: 12. Marie-Michele Gagnon, Lac Etchemin, Que., 2:09.95 (1:21.35-48.60)**
World Cup Super Combined Standings
(after one event)
1. Lindsey Vonn, U.S., 100 points; 2. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 80; 3. Nicole Hosp, Austria, 60; 4. Anna Fenninger, Austria, 50; 5. Maria Riesch, Germany, 45; 6. Michaela Kirchgasser, Austria, 40; 7. Daniela Merighetti, Italy, 36; 8. Tina Maze, Slovenia, 32; 9. Johanna Schnarf, Italy, 29; 10. Margret Altacher, Austria, 26.

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	12	2	0	.857	446	303
N.Y. Jets	10	4	0	.714	295	259
Miami	7	7	0	.500	239	261
Buffalo	4	10	0	.286	273	353

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	381	342
Jacksonville	8	6	0	.571	319	365
Tennessee	6	8	0	.429	322	282
Houston	5	9	0	.357	333	386

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Pittsburgh	10	4	0	.714	307	220
Baltimore	10	4	0	.714	324	253
Cleveland	5	9	0	.357	252	271
Cincinnati	3	11	0	.214	281	362

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	9	5	0	.643	322	281
San Diego	8	6	0	.571	388	260
Oakland	7	7	0	.500	353	330
Denver	3	11	0	.214	292	415

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	10	4	0	.714	412	339
N.Y. Giants	9	5	0	.643	360	288
Washington	5	9	0	.357	268	343
Dallas	5	9	0	.357	354	396

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	369	261
New Orleans	10	4	0	.714	354	270
Tampa Bay	8	6	0	.571	280	290
Carolina	2	12	0	.143	183	350

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	9	4	0	.692	253	228
Green Bay	8	6	0	.571	333	220
Minnesota	5	8	0	.385	230	274
Detroit	4	10	0	.286	308	329

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
St. Louis	6	8	0	.429	258	295
Seattle	6	8	0	.429	279	363
San Francisco	5	9	0	.357	250	314
Arizona	4	10	0	.286	255	370

x — clinched playoff berth.

WEEK 15

Yesterday's results
Atlanta 34 Seattle 18
Baltimore 30 New Orleans 24
Buffalo 17 Miami 14
Carolina 19 Arizona 12
Cincinnati 19 Cleveland 17
Dallas 33 Washington 30
Detroit 23 Tampa Bay 20 (OT)
Indianapolis 34 Jacksonville 24
Kansas City 27 St. Louis 13
N.Y. Jets 22 Pittsburgh 17
Oakland 39 Denver 23
Philadelphia 38 N.Y. Giants 31
Tennessee 31 Houston 17
New England 31 Green Bay 27
Tonight's game
(All times Eastern)
Chicago at Minnesota, 8:30 p.m.

FOOTBALL

NCAA

BOWL GAMES

Saturday's results
NEW MEXICO BOWL
At Albuquerque, N.M.
Brigham Young 52 Texas-El Paso 24
HUMANITARIAN BOWL
At Boise, Idaho
Northern Illinois 40 Fresno State 17
NEW ORLEANS BOWL
Troy 48 Ohio 21

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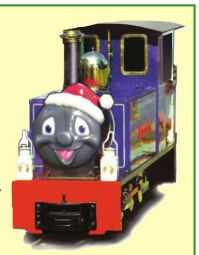
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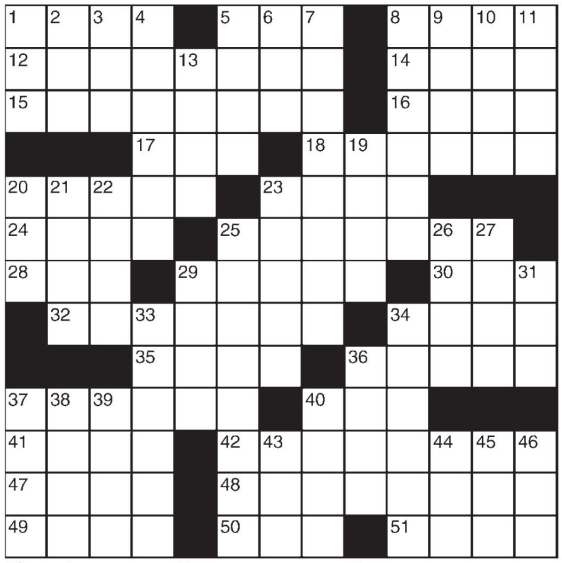

Across

1 Hula Hoop holders?
5 Drunkard
8 Staff leader?
12 Badge of authority
14 Georgetown athlete
15 Creamless liquid
16 On the rocks
17 Baby's soft food
18 Card game that also means "swindle"
20 Transit fare, at times
23 Morse symbol
24 State with certainty
25 Ad slogan since 1993
28 Young dog
29 One of the S's in SST
30 "— the fields we go"
32 Unmanly man
34 Glenn of the Eagles
35 For fear that
36 Sports venue
37 Canada's capital
40 Literary collection
41 Armstrong's landing site
42 Dairy employee
47 Therefore
48 Situation with only two options
49 See 9-Down
50 — de Janeiro
51 Say it isn't so

Down

1 That guy's
2 Pen filler
3 Omega preceder
4 Smirk
5 Quick cut
6 Lubricate
7 Heed someone's advice
8 Arty
9 With 49-Across, monster's home?
10 Watchful one
11 Disappear gradually
13 Federal agt.
19 Gomer Pyle's org.
20 Spigot
21 Egg
22 French military headgear
23 "— pass Go, ..."
25 Cobwebby
26 Traditional tales
27 Acute
29 Twist
31 Flat-piled rug
33 Grassy plains
34 Made to look guilty
36 Egyptian cross
37 Portent
38 Ripped
39 Apparel
40 Singing voice
43 Roman 3
44 Exist
45 Charged bit
46 Thirsty

▶ Yesterday's answer

P	A	C		A	D	O	S		S	E	R	B
A	N	A		N	I	N	A		C	I	A	O
W	I	T	H	D	R	A	W		A	R	G	O
			H	U	R	T			D	R	E	A	M
S	T	O	R	E		P	L	E	A			
L	U	L	L		D	R	A	W	B	A	C	K
O	B	I		T	O	A	D	Y		S	H	E
B	A	C	K	B	O	N	E		S	T	A	G
			H	A	R	K		F	A	U	N	S
M	O	L	A	R			G	I	S	T		
A	M	O	K		B	O	N	E	H	E	A	D
T	E	R	I		R	E	A	R		L	Y	E
E	N	D	S		A	R	T	Y		Y	E	N

Sudoku

	2		4		8		1	
6								2
		5	6		9	4		
	6		8	4	2		5	
	3						2	
	8		1	9	3		4	
		1	7		6	8		
3								5
	7		9		5		3	

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

9	6	7	5	3	4	8	1	2
1	5	3	8	6	2	9	7	4
2	8	4	7	1	9	6	3	5
3	7	2	4	5	6	1	8	9
6	9	5	1	8	7	4	2	3
4	1	8	9	2	3	7	5	6
7	3	6	2	4	1	5	9	8
8	4	1	3	9	5	2	6	7
5	2	9	6	7	8	3	4	1

Send a KISS

Show some love! Send a note to somebody special at kiss@metronews.ca

Happy Birthday Swica!!! I love you endlessly and am very glad we found each other. I hope we spend all of your birthdays together! Also, hope you liked your surprise:D ja tebe duje kohaju! **KAT**

Dear Daniel, we have officially lasted 4 years without killing eachother. That deserves many more years to enjoy together. Love you so much, sugarbunny. **CAROLE**

to my SpudMuffin
You are everything I never knew I wanted or needed. I am incredibly happy and want the whole world to know it. I love you with all my heart. **DA BEEACHIE**

Erica,
I love you more than anything on Earth. You're the ice cream on my cherry pie. **THOMSON MIDDLEBOTTOM**

Today 5°/4° Rain 90%
Tuesday 7°/6° Rain 80%
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Today's horoscope

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 You will be on the go non-stop today. The moment you get one task out of the way, another will need to be dealt with. Important people will be impressed.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 Be careful what you agree to over the next two or three days because the approaching lunar eclipse will blur the line between fact and fantasy. This is not a good time to be reckless with money or reputation.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Even if you are the most even-tempered Gemini, something or someone will wind you up a bit today. Whatever it is, you must find ways to defuse the situation.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You may be confused as to what's happening in the world but there is no point worrying. Nothing bad is going to happen, so promise yourself that you will stay calm at all times.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 It does not matter how hard you work today – others will find fault with everything you do. In which case, why do anything? They need you more than you need them.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Why do some people focus on negative things while ignoring all the good that goes on in the world? Whatever the reason, you will have to deal with one such individual today. Don't let him or her depress you.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 If you are not entirely happy with your current situation there is still time to change it, but you have got to be quick.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 You need to take extra care today, and tomorrow, as the lunar eclipse in Gemini warns that you could lose out financially if you don't keep track of your money.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 The approaching eclipse seems to be playing havoc with other people's emotions, so be ready for some over-the-top scenes. You, of course, will stay calm and have a good laugh at their expense. Life is endlessly amusing.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Forget about the things that went wrong over the previous 12 months. What you achieve over the next 12 months will more than make up for it.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 It may be tempting to deal with problems by pretending they don't exist, but you know that isn't the answer. Tomorrow's eclipse will bring a personal issue to a head. This time, you must, and will, deal with it.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 Today's cosmic movements will make it difficult for you to make up your mind, but that could be a good thing. A lot is going to change over the next few days.

● SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

PAT ROQUE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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526 West Broadway
555 West Hastings, Unit 15 (Harbour Centre)
88 West Pender St (Tinseltown)